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Charlie has come all the way back from the injuries that once plagued him and has proven that he's still got the even keel that brought him to Cleveland in the first place.
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Watching Omar Vizquel handle a baseball and witnessing some of the moves he's made on the field, you might think there is some slight of hand involved. But the only tricks he plays are off the field. As a shortstop, Omar is all business.
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- 89 The Traffic Director** *by Brian Love*
Indians third base coach Jeff Newman has indeed mastered the art of signing. From a pull of the earlobe, to a pat of the stomach—everything he does is watched carefully by the Tribe's offense as he directs their every move.

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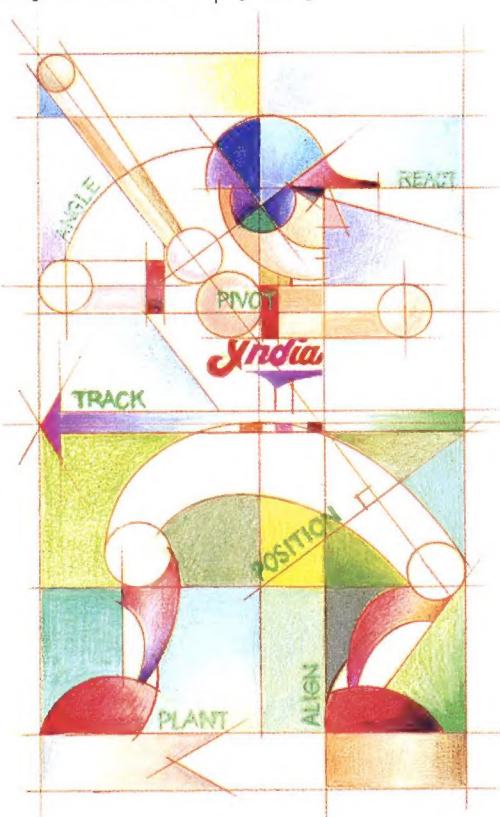
ON DECK

Batting Tips by Charlie Manuel...

Good hitters go to the ball to hit. If you are really going to hit the ball, you can't wait for it to come to you. You have got to attack the ball—focus all your body's energy on making contact. In order to do this, you have to have confidence and the positive attitude that comes with it. Step up to the plate with the conviction that this pitcher is not going to beat you. If you show that determination, the pitcher and his team will sense it. Let them worry and it will affect their play.

In order to be confident, you have to be loose at the plate. Tension is poison. If you are mentally tense, because you just missed a play on the field, or you struck out on your last at-bat, you will be tense physically.

The way to overcome it is to think positively and focus on what you are going to do. Self-assurance plays a big role in effectiveness. Don't think about making an out. Think about getting a hit and making a solid connection with the ball.



Indians Novelties Just Got Personal...

Indians' Game Day Authentics let everyone know that you were a part of the action at Jacobs Field!

Now, a true Indians fan can have his or her own personalized Indians apparel and novelties made while enjoying a ballgame. Indians Game Day Authentics is a select line of official Tribe logos and slogans that can be replicated on the item of your choice—along with your name, company name, etc.

There is a wide variety of items to choose from, and, with the number of options available to personalize them, the possibilities are virtually endless! Choose from T-shirts and sweatshirts (in both adult and children's sizes), tote bags, computer mouse pads, director's chairs and much, much more.

There is also an opportunity to have a remembrance of the actual game you attended with Action Photo T's—an action shot of your favorite player, from the game being played that day. The T-shirt also has the date on it. At the conclusion of the game, you can also get a T-shirt or sweatshirt with the day's box scores on it. Both are available the day of game only.

Stop by the novelty stand next to the Bleacher entrance on the Main Concourse (behind the left field porch, near Gate A) today!

"snickers"

"I think it's all right; it keeps the parents off the streets." — Rocky Bridges on Little League.

"Nobody told me there'd be Daves like this." — Dave Winfield, on what opposing pitchers must think when they faced Winfield and Dave Parker batting next to each other in the Angels lineup.

"Better make it four. I don't think I can eat eight." — Yogi Berra, when asked if he wanted his pizza cut into four or eight slices.

From "Baseball Shorts" by Glenn Liebman. Copyright 1994; Published by Contemporary Books, Inc.

Indians Fever Overseas?

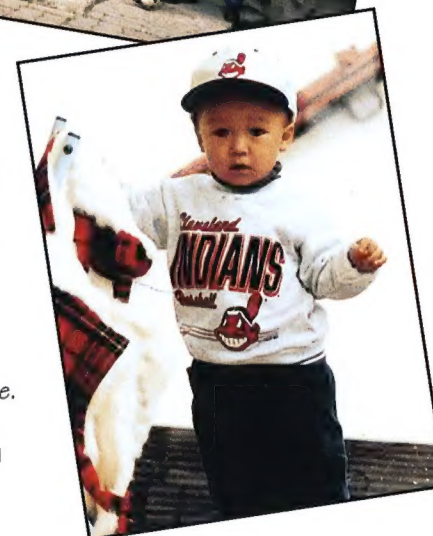
You got it.

The Indians have taken on a MASSIVE following which is not limited to the continental United States.

Cleveland photographer Ron Kuntz and his wife Nancy recently visited their relatives in Pulverheim, France (in eastern France near the German-Swiss border). Some of their relatives have visited Cleveland and returned with stories about the Cleveland Indians. The family has been following the Tribe and will most certainly be watching as the team makes their move into the playoff picture. The Kuntz's helped spread the fever by bringing everyone Indians caps. In the picture above, Ron (leaning over in the center) is pictured with Aunt Marie, a famous cook in the Alsace region in France. She has in recent years been responsible for preparing meals for dignitaries visiting the region.

The younger family members wore their caps to school and were a big hit!

Our Indians Mail Order Department has sent the likeness of lovable Chief Wahoo to some of the far reaches of the globe, including Turkey, Germany, Nairobi, Kenya, Switzerland, Australia and Japan. Many are repeat customers. In fact, one loyal Japanese fan, sends photos of his son dressed in the gear he orders!



Memorable Moments

We asked some of our Broadcast personalities to share the moments in their careers that really stand out in their minds...

Rick Manning

A member of the broadcasting team on SportsChannel, Manning remembers a truly exciting moment...

"My most memorable moment in the booth was on June 4 vs. the Toronto Blue Jays. Being down 8-0 against last year's Cy Young Award winner, it seemed like there was no way we could have won that game.

"That was the most phenomenal comeback I have ever seen. At the same time, it was very fitting considering the way this season is going. I don't think this team could do anything at this point to surprise me."

Stop by the "Back Yard" at Jacobs field during the game for a snack and still catch all the action! The Back Yard, located in center field, is open to the public 1/2 hour after the game starts and offers picnic pack meals for four people. Check it out...

Instant Replay




The End



Instant
Replay



The End



Charlie Nagy: Going Steady...



A typical pre-game scene with the Indians might find Kenny Lofton and Carlos Baerga engaged in a heated, but good-natured, exchange over what music should next vibrate the team's spacious clubhouse.

Orel Hershiser and Albert Belle continue their ping pong rivalry. Both seem good enough to earn a living at the sport.

Dennis Martinez and Tony Pena roam about. They each draw on the experience of 20 or so years spent in baseball locker rooms to consider potential victims for their next practical joke.

Charlie Nagy sits at his locker, watching and grinning. He's rarely the perpetrator of crime on a team of accomplished pranksters. "I try to steer clear of being the victim of the next practical joke," he said, with a chuckle.

Nagy enjoys the byplay, though, because he knows it contributes to the camaraderie of a close-knit team, like the Indians.

"It's a lot of fun. This is a great team. We have a great

bunch of guys," says the 28-year-old right-handed pitcher. "Everybody pulls for everybody else. It's just the makeup of the team. We have a bunch of guys who like to play the game and have fun.

"This is a lot of fun. We have a great bunch of guys. Everybody pulls for everybody else. It's just the makeup of the team. We have a bunch of guys who like to play the game and have fun." — Charles Nagy

"We were like this even when we were losing 105 games (in '91). We've just grown up, matured, and are playing better baseball. The guys we've brought in fit in well. There are no jerks, no big egos on this team."

Nagy's quiet, yet positive contribution to the clubhouse atmosphere mirrors his understated, yet essential role as the Indians have emerged into one of the elite teams in all of professional sports. The six-year veteran is one of the American League's workhorse starters, winning games and pitching innings at a pace well above the norm.

"He brings stability to our pitching staff," Indians Manager Mike Hargrove said of Nagy. "He's consistent in his personality and work habits. With Charlie's personality, you know there are certain parameters he's going to stay within, and that's very comforting.

"He's a solid, count on, dependable person, and a solid, count on, dependable pitcher. I'm very glad he's part of our rotation."

Teammates, too, appreciate what Nagy, a native of Fairfield, Connecticut, brings to the club.

"Charlie just goes out and does his job," third baseman Jim Thome said. "He's quiet, but around the clubhouse, he's a loosey-goosey, fun, down-to-earth guy."

Even though Nagy has formed—with Martinez and Hershiser—a season-long nucleus for the Tribe rotation, it's sometimes easy to overlook him among the Indians galaxy of stars.

Martinez is one of a handful of pitchers to win at least 100 games in both the American and National Leagues; Hershiser is a former Cy Young award winner and World Series Most Valuable Player. The Indians

Continued on Page 64

boast the best and deepest bullpen in the Major Leagues, and might have baseball's most exciting batting order.

Yet Nagy can be considered a star in his own right. Indeed, he was selected to the AL All-Star team in '92. And, if you project the strike-shortened seasons of last year and this year into 162-game campaigns, Nagy has been pitching at a clip of 16 victories per full season.

"I'm pitching fairly well, although I'd like to be a little more consistent," Nagy said. "I'm not an overpowering pitcher, and I don't try to trick anybody. I just try to be aggressive and go after the hitters."

There may be little flash to Nagy's style, but there's much substance to it. Nagy's been striking out hitters at a ratio of almost seven per every nine innings, one of the best such figures in the league. Typically, Nagy downplays the statistic.

"That kind of happens sometimes," Nagy says of his strikeouts. "I would rather get a first pitch groundout. There are times when I look for a strikeout, but if I strike out a guy, it's often something that just kind of happens."

Watching Nagy pitch is a pleasure. He runs to the mound to begin an inning, and to the dugout after he gets the third out. He works with his cap pulled down tight over his forehead, rightly giving the impression that he means business. If he were a position player, you couldn't imagine him not backing up his teammates in the field, or not running hard to first base.

The 6'3", 200-pounder brings more than enthusiasm to the mound. His pitch repertoire includes a two-seam, sinking fastball, and a harder, straighter, four-seam fastball. Nagy throws a split-finger pitch and a slider, and complements the harder stuff with a

curveball and changeup.

"He pitches to both sides of the plate, using the whole strike zone," said Indians pitching coach Mark Wiley. "Charlie's got good stuff. He's not a guy who'll consistently try to challenge hitters in the middle of the plate, but he has late movement on his pitches, which causes late recognition by the hitter. He can get strikeouts."

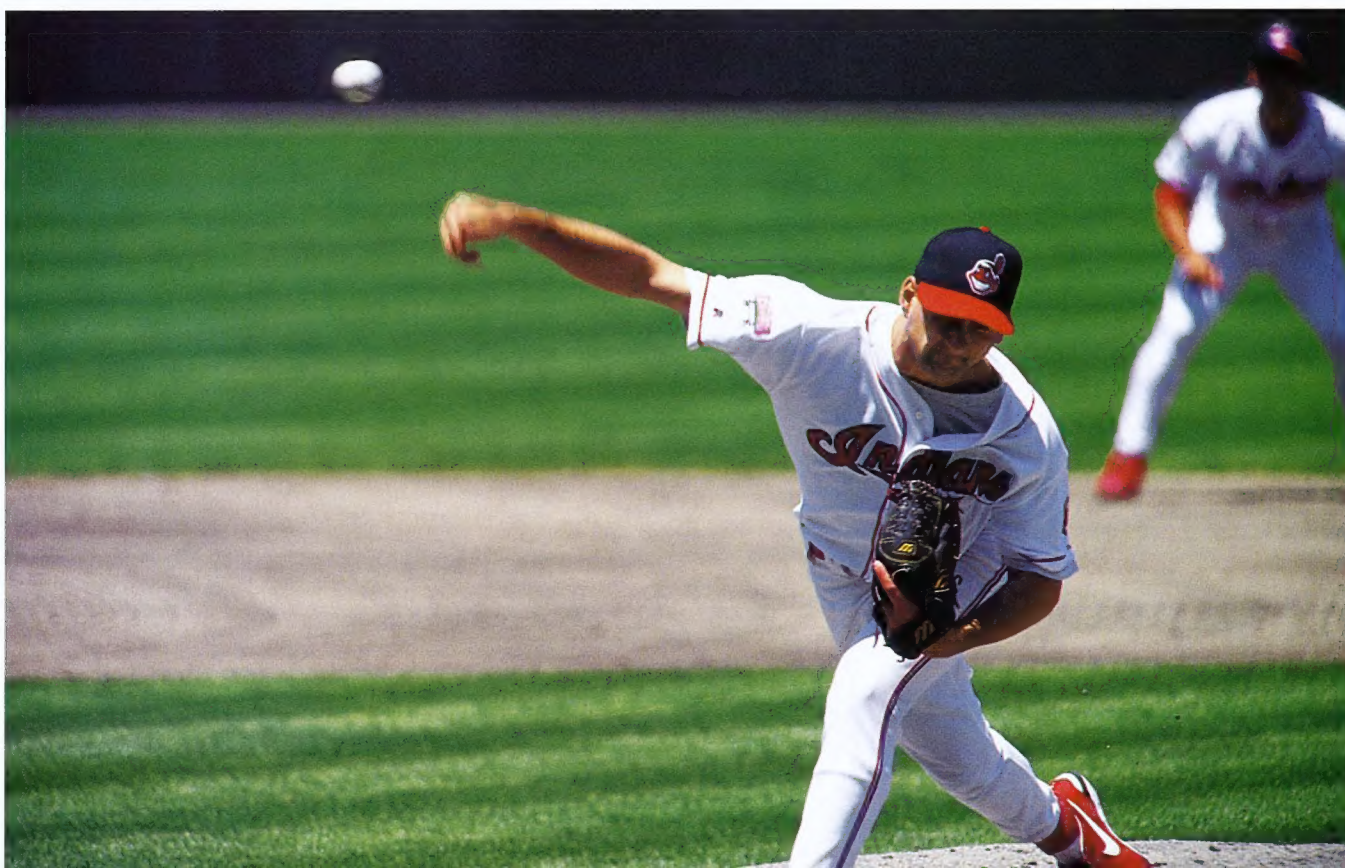
Nagy has been an effective pitcher in each of his seven professional seasons except one, 1993, when he made only nine appearances for the Indians because of a torn labrum, and slight tears in the rotator cuff of his right shoulder. He underwent surgery for the injuries that June 29.

"Ninety-three was a year that I'd rather try to forget," Nagy said. "I don't think about it too much, with everything that happened with the injury. It was a big setback. It seems like a long time ago, but it's only been a couple of years."

Nagy approached his comeback with typical resolve, though. His grittiness allowed him to make two starts, less than three months after the surgery, on a rehabilitation assignment at Class AA Canton-Akron. Then, he pitched the first three innings of the Indians final game at Cleveland Stadium on October 3, before pitching in the Florida Instructional League to further rebuild the shoulder.

"A growing and learning experience is the way I view it," Nagy said of the only major injury in his career. "I was able to bounce back the following year."

Nagy's "bounce back" last season was impressive. In the 113-game season, he was 10-8 with a 3.45 earned run average in 169 innings. The Indians were 14-9 in Nagy's 23 starts.



"I felt fine in spring training and went from there," Nagy remembers. "There are always lingering doubts whether you'll be the same pitcher after an injury, but last year helped me. I came back and threw the same. People even said I threw the ball as hard, or even harder, than before."

"(Former Tribe pitching coach and current Orioles Manager) Phil Regan helped me a lot last year, and this year, Mark Wiley has helped me tremendously. You pick up little things in your mechanics here and there. You watch films, and just try to keep on your toes."

Nagy remains on an exercise program to keep his shoulder fit. All the hard work seems to be paying off, because few pitchers in baseball are as durable.

"I think as far as strength and health, Charlie's back," Hargrove said. "He has the same stuff as he did before."

Nagy's journey to Major League prominence took a classic, direct route. After a superb athletic career at Roger Ludlowe High School in Fairfield, he went to the University of Connecticut, where he majored in economics, and was a two-time Big East "Pitcher of the Year."

Then, Nagy helped the United States to the gold medal at the 1988 Olympics in Seoul, South Korea, with two scoreless relief appearances, after posting a 3-1 record, six saves and a 1.05 earned run average during Team USA's 53-game summer tour.

During Nagy's Olympic experience, he was selected by the Indians as the 17th pick in the first round of the June draft. He was a combined 25-17 for Class A Kinston and Canton-Akron in 1989 and 1990, and pitched in nine games for the Indians that second season.

In 1991, Nagy went 10-15 in 33 starts for an Indians team that was 57-105, and the next season, he went 17-10 with a 2.96 earned run average in 33 starts, covering 252 innings. Nagy finished among the league's top 10 in five major pitching categories in 1992. At the All-Star game, he pitched one perfect inning, and even singled, becoming the first American League pitcher to get an All-Star hit since 1963.

"It was one of those years where things clicked," Nagy said. "I just pitched and had a great time. I was really excited about being at the All-Star game, and had a lot of fun. It was a big thrill to play with some of the people I watched play while growing up."

Nagy lives in Westlake during the season with his wife, Jacquelyn. The couple spend the off-season in Houston or Dallas, near Jacquelyn's parents. Nagy, though, has a special feeling for Cleveland and its people, and has an appreciation that they can now cheer for a winning team.

"I think it's great. The fans deserve it. It's been a long time coming," he said. "Bringing a winner to Cleveland is important."

"A lot of guys can play a long time and not be a part of what we have in Cleveland. We'd like to win a World Series. We want a ring."

If the Indians and their fans get a championship, unassuming Charlie Nagy might not be the boisterous ringleader of the celebration, but rest assured he'll be a big reason it happens.



Answers to "Digging For Diamonds," puzzle, page 90: Clockwise from top center: Diamond anniversary; diamond ring; diamond pattern; Diamond Springs, CA; a diamond mine; James Bond in *Diamonds Are Forever*; a sandlot diamond; a diamond-shaped sign; a baseball diamond at Jacobs Field; David Bowie, from his *Diamond Dogs* album; a diamond train crossing; the Queen of diamonds; a diamond crystalline structure; Diamond Jim Brady, Diamond Head, Hawaii; a high-quality diamond; Diamond Lake, IL; a diamond-back adder; industrial diamonds in diamond drill bits; Neil Diamond's *Live in America*.

(he's now a three-time member), he finished third in the AL Most Valuable Player voting and was selected to the Associated Press Major League All-Star Team (with teammate Carlos Baerga).

Belle credits the Tribe for acquiring one of the top run producers of all time and a recent member of the esteemed 3,000-Hit Club, Eddie Murray, for providing instant credibility behind him in the fifth spot in the lineup.

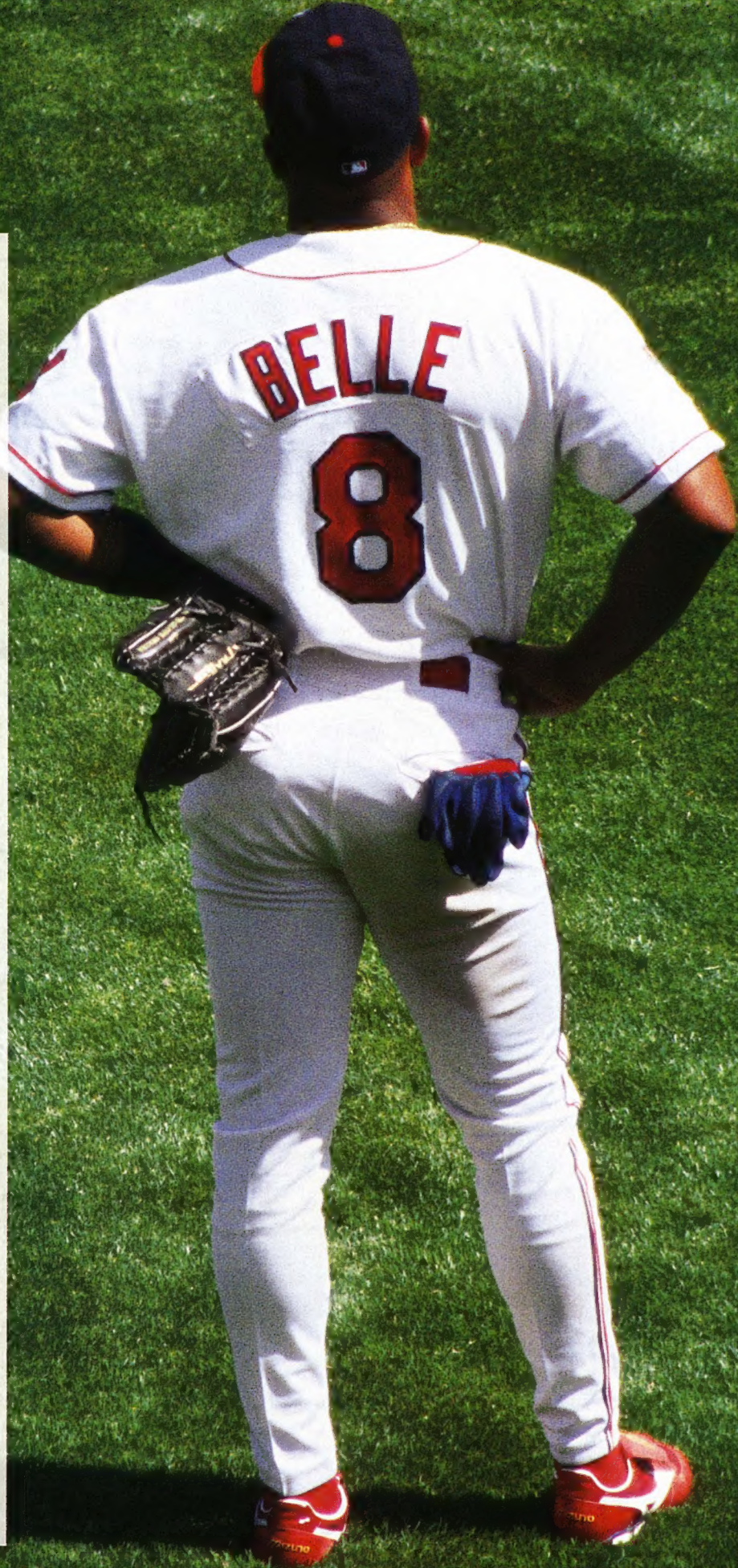
"The big difference last year from the others," Belle praised, "was that I had a great player in Eddie Murray batting behind me. I know that I got better pitches to hit because Eddie was there."

Albert feels at home in Cleveland for many reasons, and he's most comfortable in the city's newest house, Jacobs Field.

"Whether you were having a good day or a bad one, it was exciting to come to the park last year," Belle said of the Ballpark's debut in '94. "Guys would come early (they still do) and sit around and talk after the game. At the old (Cleveland) Stadium, there was a rush to get out.

"Today's athletes need top-of-the-line facilities, like weight rooms and batting cages," said Albert who found the surroundings to his liking when he led the league in home batting average last year with a .413 mark with 21 homers and 59 RBI in 47 games. This year, Albert is batting at a .320 clip in the friendly confines.

And, Albert has hit the "Official Albert Belle Target" with mammoth and well-planned home runs. Four times he ended home games in 1994 with shots heard around Ontario, East Ninth and Carnegie streets, and perhaps he saved his most dramatic shot for July 18 when he smashed a grand slam to



© Gregory Drezdron; both photos

A FORCE OF HABIT

By Tom Bochenek

In Latin, it's known as *Modus Operandi* (mode of operation). In English, the words that come to mind are: routine, habit and ritual. Whatever the phraseology, Albert Belle's at-bat patterns of preparation are as identical as a capacity crowd at Jacobs Field—both take place every time, every day.

Call it a habit. It never fluctuates. Albert sets himself in the right-handed batter's box by placing his right foot at the left corner of the plate, then drops his left foot directly behind the right. Next, a line in the dirt is made to set up his exact location in the box.

Having set his line of attack, the Indians cleanup hitter steps out of the box, takes his effortless, but strategically planned, two imaginary swings. Then, with a right-handed alert to the umpire, he gingerly steps into the box as if he's afraid to wrinkle the dirt under his spikes.

Afraid? Hah. The only scared person in the ballpark should be the pitcher, for Albert Belle is ready to go to work. And, he's got the pitcher all figured out.

"Albert may be one of the most mentally prepared hitters to go to the plate that I've been around in a long time," Indians Manager Mike Hargrove once said. "Albert watches the pitcher, and what pitches he's been throwing to other hitters compared to him in the lineup.

"Albert knows the pitcher's patterns, his out pitch," Hargrove continued. "He has the unique ability to really focus in on what he's doing and shut everything else out. He gives himself every chance in the world to be successful."

That drive to success begins in Belle's mind, which works like a computer. He saves his memory of

each at-bat by writing, in detail, on index cards what he experienced at the plate appearance, thus creating his own encyclopedia of pitchers.

Thanks to Albert's investment in the index cards, perhaps corporate sponsor Office Max should move its advertisement at Jacobs Field from right field to Belle's position along the left field wall in honor of one of its star patrons.

"I've never seen a player do what he does," first base coach Dave Nelson



© Gregory Drezdron, 1995

said. "He writes everything down, what he got out on, what he hit. He doesn't leave anything to memory."

"There are certain things I like to do before every game," Belle acknowledged. "If you look at our new Ballpark, we have so many things we can do before the game.

"We have a nice weight room, a nice video equipment room where we can watch the opposing pitchers and we have great training facilities, so there's so many more things I can do to prepare for the game.

"I like to be mentally prepared."

Suffice to say, all the mental preparation has paid off for Belle in another big way in 1995. Heading into September, this year's American League's starting All-Star leftfielder leads the league in extra base hits and ranks prominently among the league leaders in home runs, RBI, total bases, and slugging percentage.

Earlier this year, Belle became the second fastest Indians player (behind Rocky Colavito) to reach the 150-homer mark, and he's in search of extending his team record of 30-plus home runs seasons to four in a row. He's also looking for his fourth straight 100-plus RBI campaign.

"What I want to be is the best run producer, to drive in more runs than anyone else," said Belle who accomplished that feat in 1993 when he led the AL with 129 RBI. "That is what means the most to me."

In the meantime, Belle has maintained a plus-.300 average on the AL's top hitting team.

"I see myself as a .300 hitter," the 29-year-old Belle said. "I'm still an aggressive hitter, but when I came up, I was an aggressive out-of-control hitter. I got upset when a pitcher wanted to walk me, and I'd swing at bad pitches. I kept trying to force things.

"Now, I'll take a walk if I have to. I'm forcing the pitchers to give in to me, instead of giving in to them. I also don't let a couple of bad at-bats carry over. I don't dwell on them as much."

There haven't been many bad at-bats for Belle since becoming a regular in 1991, especially last year when he hit an astonishing .357, second best in the AL to Paul O'Neill, and third in the league in RBI (101) and home run ratio. Those numbers vaulted Belle into his second straight All-Star appearance

straight away center field off all-time saves leader Lee Smith in the bottom of the ninth inning for a climactic win over California.

"I hung a slider and Albert hit it into the barbecue section," Smith said after the game.

Belle's All-Star power, especially at home, draws raves from another perennial All-Star, Kirby Puckett of the Minnesota Twins.

"Albert Belle, he's awesome man," Puckett said. "If you give him his pitch, he's got that swing where he uppercuts the ball, and if you throw him where he's swinging... good luck! Albert's a good player, he's a very intense player and he's the kind of player where he wants to get a hit every time. If he doesn't get a hit, he's mad. I guess that's what keeps him going."

"It goes to show you what 42,000 people in a brand new Ballpark will do," Belle said. "I'm tickled pink to play there (Jacobs Field). We spent extra dollars for the right equipment. What we have now is the best in baseball."

The best in accommodations has had a domino effect—the Indians have carried the top record in the Majors all year.

"It's been a long transition," said Belle. "I'm the only guy from the '89 squad that's left. Each year, we've tacked on some tremendous ballplayers and it's finally come together for us this year."

"We've been able to put together a pretty good season. With two months left, we can't let up now. We just have to continue to play good baseball."

The Tribe's mercurial rise to the top has spawned nationwide interest that is reflected in the team's road attendance. Cleveland is the top drawing attraction in the league, thanks mostly to the game's No. 1 home run hitting team that has a knack for last-inning comebacks.

Fans are enthralled with power, and that recognition has hit home. Malley's, the family-owned candy company in Cleveland, introduced the Albert Belle Bar in May. The chocolate bar with crisped rice falls in line with famed sluggers who had confections named after them—Babe Ruth and Reggie Jackson.

Albert jokingly thinks the candy bar has had a remarkable effect on relief stopper Jose Mesa, who leads the Majors in saves and is closing in on the team record.

"Why do you think Jose Mesa is throwing 105 miles an hour?" Belle told reporters. "Last year, he only threw 88 (mph)."

It makes sense for the candy bar to have a Cleveland connection because Albert Belle has returned the compliment. The Shreveport, LA, native now calls Euclid his year-round home.

"It's a good neighborhood," said Albert who finished his

"Albert Belle, he's awesome man. If you give him his pitch, he's got that swing where he uppercuts the ball, and if you throw him where he's swinging... Good Luck!" —Kirby Puckett



college degree in accounting at Cleveland State University.

"My neighbors take care of my place when I'm gone. Everybody watches out for everyone.

"I said before, I'd like to play my whole career in one uniform. I froze my butt off this year (last winter), but it felt good to see the fans when I was out. They'd come up and say, 'hope you guys go to the World Series.' It was pretty fun."

Fun for Albert away from baseball takes him to highly competitive, singular activities—golf, table tennis, chess, and crossword puzzles—that bring into focus his competitive zeal, tunnel vision and a relentless mental approach that defines Belle.

For example, the clubhouse at Jacobs Field includes a table tennis set. When it opened last year, relief pitcher Eric Plunk defeated Belle twice in a row. Albert focused his efforts into becoming the club-



house champion of the game commonly known as ping pong. Soon, Albert had a record of 32-2 on the table.

"I mean, I'm competitive, too," Plunk said. "But, he's so serious about whatever he does. And, he's smart. He could tell that I didn't have a great backhand, and he just started to attack my weakness."

Albert also channels his energy into charity in Cleveland and Shreveport. In his hometown, the Galilee Baptist Church named a ballpark after him, and Albert was active in the restoration of old League Park on the east side.

Belle and Baerga co-sponsor a charitable golf tournament that assists: Christian Family Outreach Camping Program that provides an opportunity for more than 8,000 inner city youths from cities throughout Ohio to participate in week-long camping sessions; Esperanza Inc. that serves the

IF YOU CAN'T BE THERE BE HERE

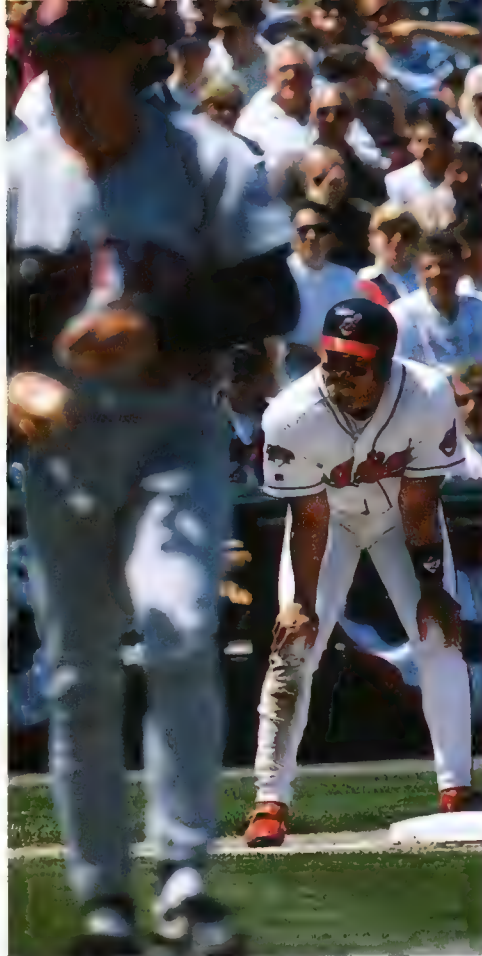
If you don't have a ticket to Jacobs Field and you're not going on the road with the team, there's only one place to be and that's SportsChannel.

WHAT TRIBE FANS WANT.



educational needs of Hispanic Americans with scholarship assistance and educational services that promote academic achievement; Make-A-Wish Foundation of Northeast Ohio, a volunteer-based, non-profit organization that grants wishes of children under the age of 18 who suffer from life-threatening illnesses; the Luke Easter Scholarship Fund, presented annually to a Cleveland State underclassman who best exemplifies the spirit of Luke Easter (former Indians first baseman, who showed through leadership and an unselfish concern for his teammates, a great loyalty, and enthusiasm for baseball); and, The Responsible Social Values Program that provides an abstinence-based sex education curriculum to more than 20,000 sixth, seventh and eighth grade students in the greater Cleveland area school system.

"Albert is the most popular



© Gregory Drezdson, 1995

player we have," said Indians Executive Vice President and General Manager John Hart. "He is a folk cult hero. We brought him up. He struggled as a young player. They've (fans) seen him mature as a human being.

"Albert does more community things behind the scenes than anybody we have," Hart added. "The community just threw themselves behind him."

The feeling is mutual.

"It's kind of hard to believe that this is my fifth year," Belle poignantly said. "I've been doing the same thing over and over, been pretty consistent, nothing has been dramatic, and I've been showing progressively increasing numbers every year."

It's a routine, habit, ritual, *modus operandi* if you will, that Clevelanders have happily gotten used to, one that will keep on going.

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The Intelligence Of The Minds...

By Tom Bochenek

They play a position that is defined by equipment universally known as "the tools of ignorance," but in Cleveland, the catchers have developed their own slogan—"the intelligence of the minds."

Sandy Alomar and Tony Pena play their position with their heads as much as their talented arms and legs. Their wisdom and experience *behind* the plate, as well as their steady contributions *at* the plate, play a crucial role with the American League's top pitching staff, the first line of defense on the Indians record-setting first place pace in the Central Division.

The Alomar/Pena tandem has a total of eight All-Star appearances and five Rawlings Gold Glove Awards for their defensive excellence. The 29-year-old Alomar is one of the premier young catchers in the Majors, while the wily 38-year-old Pena offers important insurance, a claim that few big league teams can make today.

Consider that when Alomar missed the first 56 games this season with a knee injury, Pena's 15 years of experience provided the proper tonic for the Indians catching illness. The Tribe shot out of the gate and into a commanding lead by the end of May, thanks in large part to a pitching staff that has continued to produce the AL's only sub 4.00 earned run average, and the first half efforts of Pena and, more recently, of Alomar.

Sandy Alomar Jr. comes from a family rich in baseball lore. His father, Sandy Sr., was a steady and versatile infielder for six teams from 1964-78, served as a coach for

the San Diego Padres and is presently a minor league infield/baserunning instructor for the Chicago Cubs. Brother Roberto is an All-Star second baseman for the Toronto Blue Jays, who, like Sandy, was signed as a non-drafted free agent by the San Diego Padres.

By the late 1980s, Sandy and Benito Santiago were hailed as the top catching prospects in the game, and the Padres felt the luxury could reap them talent on the trade market. The Indians, looking to rebuild through youth, offered All-Star outfielder Joe Carter in December, 1989, the Padres agreed. In return, the Tribe received Alomar, who was *The Sporting News* 1989 "Minor League Player of the Year," Carlos Baerga and Chris James.

It turned out to be a trade of one All-Star in exchange for two premier All-Star infielders for the Indians.

The start of a new decade (1990) signaled the beginning of a fresh and committed developmental program by the Indians. Alomar was made starting catcher, and he paid immediate dividends when he batted .290 with nine home runs and 66 RBI. He was unanimously chosen the 1990 American League "Rookie of the Year," and became the first rookie catcher to start an All-Star Game. In the Mid-Summer Classic in Chicago, Sandy rapped two hits and scored the game-winning run for the AL at Wrigley Field. Alomar capped off his incredible rookie season by earning a Rawlings Gold Glove Award.

Alomar is an anomaly at a position that has traditionally been known for short, barrel-chested types, like Berra and Ernie Lombardi, whose handshakes felt



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like a bag of shelled peanuts.

Alomar is 6'5", the tallest receiver in the game (with Pittsburgh's Mark Parent), and Sandy recognizes the inherent differences with his size.

"I'm a different type of catcher," Sandy acknowledged. "I'm a taller guy, and have different mechanics, so I can't really copy anything from Tony, because he's shorter and has a different kind of release."

Injuries, from two torn webbings between his right ring and middle fingers, to back and knee surgeries, have landed Alomar on the disabled list six times since 1991. The various physical problems have changed Sandy's ways of working behind the plate.

"With injuries, you have to change your style of play," said Alomar, who treasures the historic significance he and Robby share as just the third brother combination (joining Joe and Dom DiMaggio and Mort and Walker Cooper) ever to start an All-Star Game (1991 and '92). "I used to be a little more wild and do some crazy stuff behind the plate, like using my bare hand to stop a ball—I don't do that anymore."

"Right now, I'm not laying back, but I'm pretty cautious of what I'm doing and I'm trying to be smarter back there."

The Indians, too, have displayed their intelligence twice by signing Pena as a free agent to provide important support.

"It's very important to have two guys," Alomar said. "One guy can rest and the other one can do the job. In any case, if one of those two guys goes down, you have one

who is still going to do the job. That's the situation here, if I go down or Tony goes down, the other guy we have has enough experience and can go out there and help the pitching staff."

"We have a good relationship with each other," Alomar noted. "We both know our roles, and basically, the bottom line is that (manager) Mike Hargrove decides who is going to play. I've had a lot of injuries the last three years, and my playing time has been cut a little bit, but I feel comfortable with my role and the also with way Grover has handled the situation."

"Tony's a great guy and he's done a great job here, too."

"The relationship between Sandy and myself is real close," Pena echoed. "Even outside the ballpark, we talk a lot about baseball. I don't know everything, and he realizes that he doesn't know everything either."

"The communication helps us a lot. Whenever I do something wrong, Sandy tells me, and whenever he does something wrong, I'm right there."

"Sandy being back is a plus," said third base coach Jeff Newman, a former catcher who works with the Tribe's backstoppers. "I think that's the edge we needed, that one through nine we're strong offensively. I can't think of another ballclub in the big leagues that has the quality catching we do."

Since returning in late June, Alomar has added power to his .355 average with four home runs in his first 41 at-bats. That included his first two-homer game at Texas—not bad for an eighth or ninth place hitter who had a career-high 14 homers last year.

"I like to hit some home runs, but I'm not a power hitter," Sandy said. "It's nice to finish the season with double figures in home runs, though. It would be special for me, because I'm at the bottom of the lineup."

Sandy Alomar and Tony Pena play their position with their heads as much as their talented arms and legs. Their wisdom and experience *behind* the plate, as well as their steady contributions *at* the plate play a crucial role with the American League's top pitching staff.



"Since my back surgery (in May 1993), I feel my swing through the strike zone is a lot quicker than it was. Even though I had a great year offensively in my rookie year, since '93 I feel like I'm swinging the bat with more pop. I'm more free swinging the bat."

"They both have a lot of experience," Newman pointed out, "and when they call for a pitch, the pitcher has confidence in their judgment and you see very little shaking off of calls. The thought process between a pitcher and catcher is very, very important. If a pitcher is thinking fastball and the catcher is throwing down breaking ball all the time, you're not going to get a good fastball or breaking ball."

"That doesn't happen often with our two catchers," said Newman.

It was Yogi Berra, an All-Star catcher for the Yankees from the 1940s through the early 60s, who suggested that baseball is "90 percent mental, the other half is physical." Well, Yogi might be off on his calculations, but take it from a catcher who knows—catching is the thinking man's position on and off the field.

"It's more mental than physical," Alomar said of the job. "A good part of the game is mental... you have to work with the pitching staff, you have to know the hitters and you have to know a lot of signs."

"You've got to memorize a lot of information during a game. You have to pull on a lot of mental stress."

"We can't go down behind the plate and think about our hitting when we call a game. This is why the position is so tough mentally, because you have to prepare yourself. You can't think of anything else, just what finger you are going to put down (for the pitch) and what is the right pitch to call." —Tony Pena

"Catching is a position that demands so many things," said Pena who has worn the tools for Pittsburgh, St. Louis and Boston before arriving in Cleveland last year. "We have to stay focused more than anybody else."

"Whenever we go down behind the diamond, our mind has to be a crystal. We have to have a clear mind to be able to pick up on things that will allow us to call the game the way we want to call the game."

It may be the only position on the field where the player must leave his last at-bat in the dugout.

"We can't go down behind the plate and think about our hitting when we call the game," Pena, a four-time Gold Glove winner, pointed out. "This is why the position is so tough mentally, because you have to prepare yourself. You can't think of anything else, just what finger you are going to put down (for the pitch) and what is the right pitch to call."

"And, not only that, we have to prepare because we have so many signs that the manager and coaches pass to us and we have to know all the signs. If we screw up one of those signs, the game can be on the line."

The game was on the line in New York when Pena visited relief pitcher Jose Mesa on the mound on May 16. The Indians held a big lead, but the Yankees were threatening against Mesa, who was still gaining confidence in his role



as stopper. A stern Pena was offering strategy to Mesa, and when he turned to leave the mound, Pena softly tapped Mesa in the face with his glove.

General Patton's slap of a soldier in World War II didn't receive the notoriety that Pena's "attention getter" got in Cleveland. Mesa silenced the Yanks, which helped jettison him in becoming the game's top closer in '95.

"I thought he was crazy, but it woke me up," said Mesa.

It was classic Tony Pena—take charge like, hey, a general in a platoon. In the words of broadcaster Harry Caray, "It could be..." the face mask fixed atop the helmet with a chew of tobacco working a frenzy; "it might be..." that purposeful stride to the hill; "it is..." that pounding of the glove, the Nolan Ryan-like bullet throws back to the pitcher and those patented squats behind the plate—who can forget those octopus-like spreads that made Pena famous, starting in Pittsburgh—that signal Pena at work.

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"Sometimes, we have to take charge," the Dominican Republic native stressed. "As catcher, we have to take charge because we are the only ones that have the rest of the ballclub in front of us. We can see everything."

Seeing the game develop is important, having the vision to make an impact has equal value.

"There are many times during a game when I can pick my time to visit the mound, especially to talk to

the pitcher," Pena said. "That's one thing that I've been able to do my whole career. Catchers are like quarterbacks, they have to be alert for everything."

"And, sometimes, I just come out and try to do what I need to do to help us win."

Pena knows a few things about winning. The 6-foot, 185-pounder has played in two league championship series, where he has a .314 average. He batted .409 with nine hits in seven games in the 1987 World Series with the Cardinals. Since coming to Cleveland, Pena has

Focus on the game, not on focusing.



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added pop to his bat, thanks to the tutoring of hitting instructor Charlie Manuel.

"Charlie has helped me a lot," Tony praised. "Last year, I had a great season (.295 after hitting .181 in Boston in '93), this year, even though my numbers are down, I've been hitting a lot of balls harder and hitting a lot of balls right at people.

"Charlie figured me out so well that he can come out and tell me, 'Tony, you're doing this... you're doing that,' and all of a sudden my swing is back on track. Even when I make an out, I'm making good solid contact. I feel good if I hit the ball well."

Pena has developed a chemistry with starter Dennis Martinez and has become the righthander's personal catcher. Over Martinez's last 27 starts with Pena catching, Martinez is 14-5 with a 2.66 ERA. Prior to Tony becoming Dennis' personal catcher, Martinez was 6-4 with a 4.17 ERA.

"Tony's been doing a great job with Dennis," said

© Gregory Drezdron



Newman. "They work well together and it's like they really don't need signs. They know how to go about the game."

"I think baseball is a real psychological game," Pena said of his situation with Martinez. "Sandy can do the same thing I do, but for some reason, Dennis feels more comfortable with me behind the plate. I don't think there's much difference between Sandy and myself. We still call the game similarly.

"With Dennis, we have a great relationship, I know him well. I know what he likes to do in every situation and I know every single move he makes. This is why I make it easy for him and he makes it easy for me—whenever I see him do something wrong, I just come out and try to tell him what he's doing wrong."

Sandy Alomar and Tony Pena play every game trying to correct the flaws of others. For sure, they have plenty on their minds.

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The Magician

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"I know my footwork helps my fielding... It helps me get into position to make a good throw and helps me get into a spot where I can get a good hop on a ground ball, too."
—Omar Vizquel



By Bill Needle

It would be far too easy to attribute Omar Vizquel's reputation as the best fielding shortstop in baseball to his velvety hands. Sure, it's a known fact around baseball that he can do more with bad hops than a discount brewery. But good hops, bad hops, in-between hops or charity hops, there's more to Vizquel's fielding than just his hands.

Actually, the feats Vizquel accomplishes in the field for the Tribe might have more to do with, well, his feet.

If Fred Astaire played baseball, he'd have been a shortstop. And if Astaire were a shortstop, he'd still have to take a back seat to Vizquel. Astaire did some mighty fine routines with coat racks and canes, to be sure, but he'd have been hard-pressed to equal Vizquel's pre-game routine with a baseball.

It's three-thirty in the afternoon at Jacobs field and the Indians are working out early as a team, trying to shake off whatever rust has accumulated over the All-Star break that ends in just a few hours with a visit from the Oakland A's.

Vizquel approaches a stray baseball that has come to rest near his position at shortstop. Instead of picking it up however, Vizquel straddles the ball, and clasps it between his heels. He jumps, kicking his legs behind him so the ball is thrust into the air behind him, roughly shoulder high.

Then the real show begins. Vizquel turns to face the ball and for the next several minutes, he keeps it alive with his feet, from right foot to left, double dribbling

with each foot from time to time, using the sides of his feet, stopping the baseball on each arch, then resuming the juggling. Were it not for the fact his teammates see this kind of performance from Vizquel all the time, one could imagine a crowd encircling him, spurring him on as if he were a street performer working for spare change.

"I know my footwork helps my fielding," Vizquel said. "I played all kinds of sports growing up—soccer, basketball and volleyball—and good footwork is important in those, too. It helps me get into position to make a good throw and helps me get into a spot where I can get a good hop on a ground ball, too."

Big league players don't "oohh" and "aahh" very often. "Never get too high or too low," that's the motto for men whose season lasts half-a-year, through three seasons of the weather and tends to blur images far more often than magnify them. Albert Belle hits a ball into the courtyard between Jacobs Field and Gund Arena? No big deal. Tomorrow's another game. Maybe tomorrow he'll hit the scoreboard. Carlos Baerga fouls off 11 pitches before hitting a crucial home run? Ho-hum. A week later, he'll battle super-closer John Wetteland on successive nights for late-inning go-ahead hits. Not too high. Not too low. All in stride. Except, maybe, when it comes to talking about the fielding genius of one Omar Enrique Vizquel.

"Sometimes you'll make a mistake and think the ball's hit in the hole or up the middle and amazingly, he makes the play and you're in the dugout instead of still out there pitching," said Orel Hershisier.

Or more simply put, "He's the best shortstop in baseball right now," said Indians infield coach Buddy Bell.

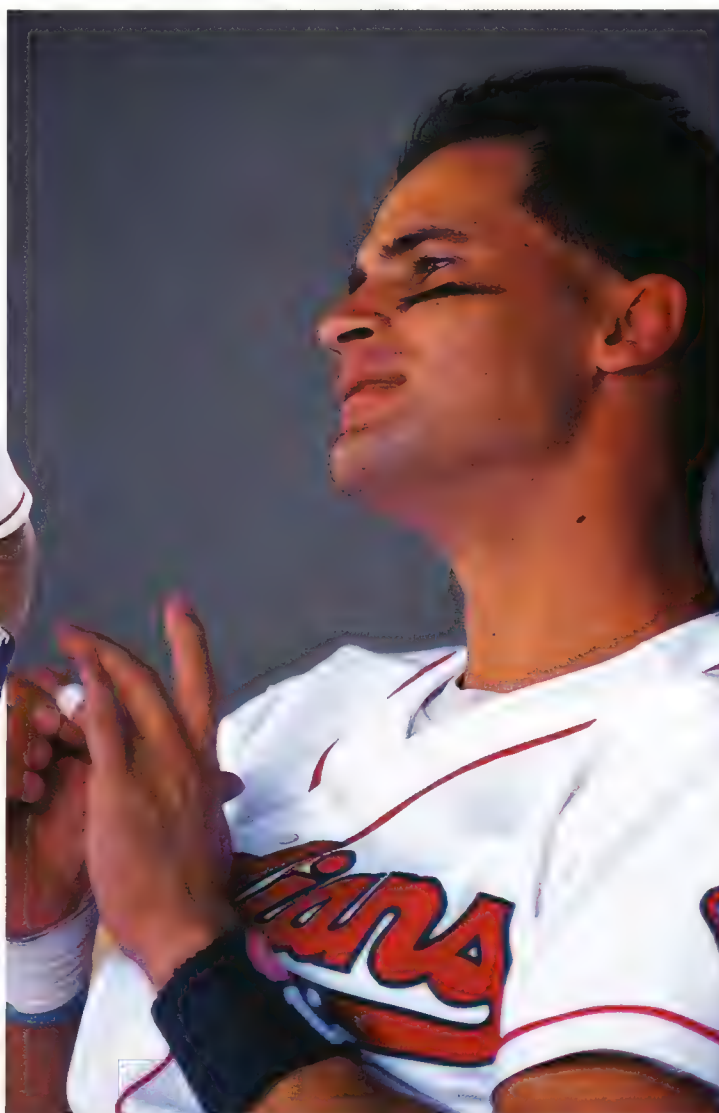
Or better yet, go back to a play Vizquel made against the Twins in early July. Twins' second baseman Chuck Knoblauch smashed a high bouncer into the artificial turf at the Metrodome. Vizquel charged the ball, leapt into the air before fielding it, bare-handed the ball and fired to first before landing. Knoblauch beat Vizquel's throw, but even a veteran baseball man like Mike Hargrove left his not-to-high, not-to-low, even keel.

"Most of the plays Omar makes like that are instinctive," Hargrove said. "He is amazing."

Vizquel has always been a shortstop. He began playing in his native Caracas, Venezuela at the age of eight.



© Gregory Drezdzen, both photos



His father, Omar, Sr., was also a talented baseball player, "but he was too poor to play in games where he might have been scouted," Vizquel said.

"My dad knows a lot about baseball and he was the biggest influence on me without putting pressure on me," Vizquel added. "He would watch me field, watch me hit and give me little pointers. Playing in the big leagues was one of his dreams."

Vizquel's first pro experience came in 1984, at age 17, in Butte, Montana—about as far away from Caracas as one can get. But despite the distance, the challenge of pro ball, the language and the culture, there wasn't much doubt that Vizquel would accept the challenges.

"Marty Martinez was a scout in Venezuela," Vizquel said. "When I turned 16, he came to my parents' house and asked me if I wanted to be a pro ballplayer. We signed the contract that day."

Signed by the Mariners, Vizquel spent five years in the minors in places like Butte, Bellingham, WA, Wausau, WI, Salinas, CA, Vermont and Calgary before his first taste of big league action in May, 1989 with Seattle.

By then, the classic "good field, no hit" label had begun to follow Vizquel. He would hit .220 as a rookie in 143 games with the Mariners in 1989, but ranked sixth among league shortstops on defense.

Knee problems limited his performance in 1990, and in 1991, he again played superbly in the field while managing a .230 at the plate. But by then, people were looking at what Vizquel could do in the field rather than what he couldn't do at the plate.

"In Seattle during his early years, they were

talking about trading Omar for a shortstop who could hit," said former Indians and Mariners infield coach Ron Clark. "I said, 'You and everybody else want a shortstop who can hit. The main thing you want from a shortstop is a guy who can catch the ball.' They were talking about the runs Omar didn't drive in on offense instead of the runs he saved with his glove on defense."

They were still talking about Vizquel's offense in 1992—but in a far different way. He had a breakthrough campaign, leaving the world of .220 for the rarified air of a .294 season batting average. To make things even better, his already remarkable fielding improved as well. Vizquel led all Major League shortstops with a .989 fielding average while his career-best batting rate led all AL shortstops.

"I got confidence in myself that year," Vizquel remembers. "By 1992, I had been switch-hitting for five seasons and was starting to feel good about that. And before the season, Marty Martinez got me to use a heavier bat and started me trying to hit the ball to the opposite field, to use the whole field. And the great thing was, when I started to hit, it helped my defense."

As is often the case in the topsy-turvy world of baseball, Vizquel didn't win a Gold Glove in 1992, the season in which his seven errors in 136 games made him the shortstop with the best fielding percentage in the Majors. He would win that Gold Glove in 1993, his final season in Seattle, despite finishing third in fielding percentage. He won his second Gold Glove last year.

But for all his honors as a fielder, most who know the Indians point to Vizquel's WORST day as a Major League shortstop as the best measure of the man who flaunts superstition by wearing the number 13 on his uniform.

On April 16, 1994, against the Royals at Jacobs Field, Vizquel made three errors—in the same game. The Rockies may tumble, Gibraltar may crumble, they're only made of clay, the man once sang—but Omar Vizquel just doesn't make three errors in a game. Not after a Gold Glove season, and not in his first fortnight as a member of the then unproven Indians.

After the game, Vizquel would have been forgiven a lengthy stay in the shower, or an unscheduled trip to the trainer's room—

both places off-limits to the media. Nary a soul would have complained had Vizquel chosen to duck the press after the worst game of his ML career.

But Vizquel ducked nothing and spoke with everyone. He answered all the questions and accepted responsibility for his errors. By the end of an obviously painful post-game session, Vizquel had earned the respect of every member of the Cleveland-area media and polished his already-respected image among his teammates.

"A lot of fans were still trying to get to know him," Hargrove remembered. "I felt sorry for him. They booed him loud and long."

"After the game, there he was still in uniform, waiting for the rush of questions," Hargrove remembers. "He looked everyone in the eye and answered all the questions, some more than once."

"A lot of other players wouldn't have stood up the way Omar did."

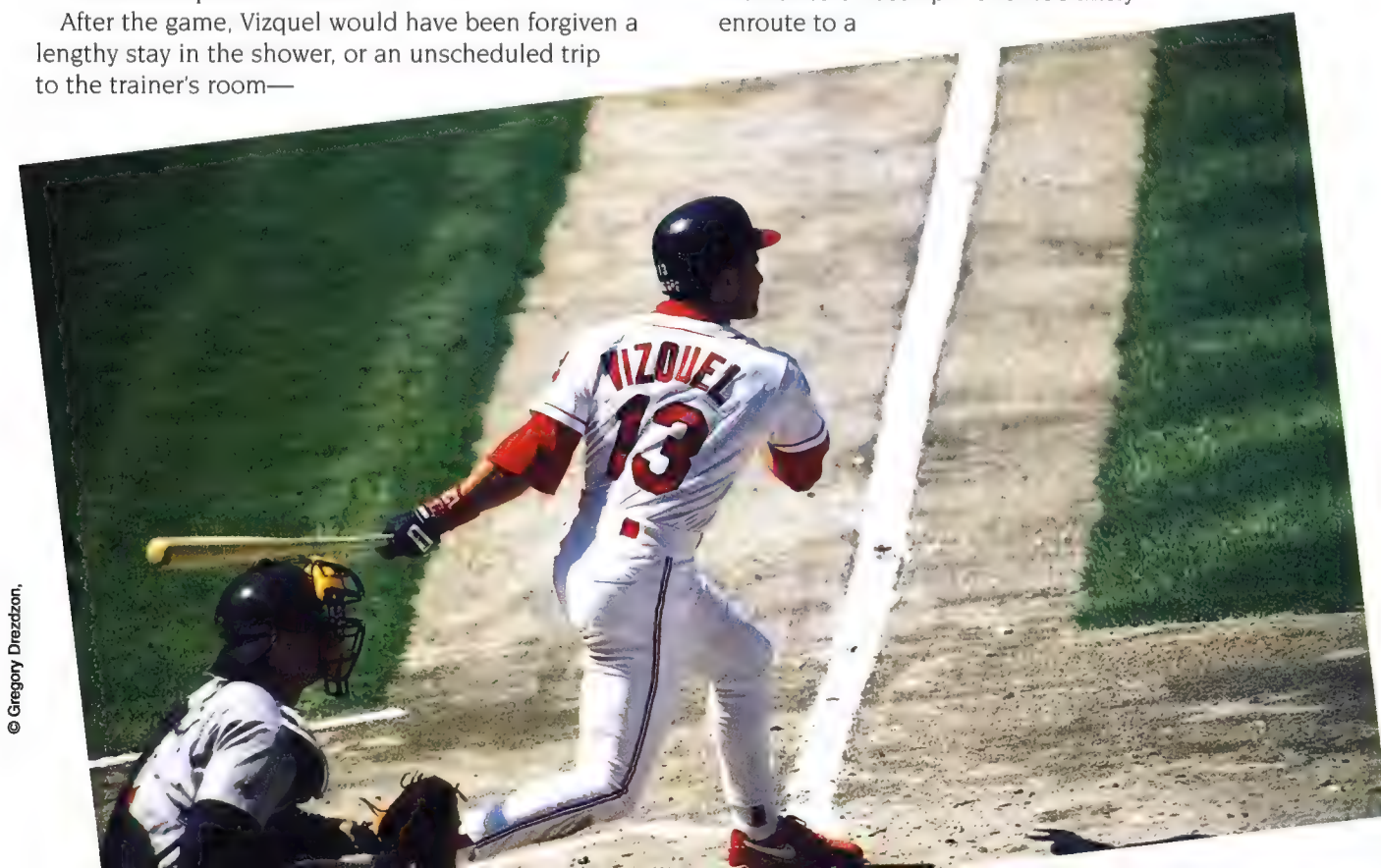
Vizquel knew it would be tough to face criticism, but he had support.

"In a way, I always waited for a moment like that," he said. "I had never done that. In 20 years of playing baseball, from when I was six or seven years old, I had never made three errors in a game."

"It was a real bad day. You know it's a kids' game, but you have to be a man to play it—to be able to stand up to the pressures you face. I knew I had to call my family, to talk to my parents, to talk to my wife."

"They gave me support. They basically said 'stuff happens.' It's baseball. Another day and you'll go 4-for-4 with five RBI."

Vizquel's second Gold Glove did a lot to erase the memories of last April and he's likely enroute to a



third consecutive Gold Glove in 1995. But there's far more to him than any statistic that baseball has developed as a measure as a player.

It's early in the shortened 1995 season. The Indians have sent their players into the community in the hopes of mending the relationship between the fans and baseball. On a particular morning in Cleveland's downtown hub, Tower City, Vizquel, Carlos Baerga, Wayne Kirby and Jason Grimsley are a four-man panel, answering questions on the clubs' flagship radio station, WKNR, as a part of the mid-day sportstalk show, signing autographs for roughly a thousand fans who have gathered, and basically, doing whatever they can to make things smoother between the fans and the players.

All goes famously. Kirby is hysterically funny in his answers and manner, a genuinely engaging man. Baerga is royalty, growing into his status as one of baseball's elite, secure, polite and charming with fans, yet with a clear sense of who he is and where he fits in baseball's order. Grimsley is meat and potatoes. Honest, straightforward and completely the Texan he is by birth.

And then there's Vizquel.

In person, he appeals to everyone. Women seem to adore him. Men want to shake his hand. Kids can't stop saying his name. He is obviously beloved in the town he's been a part of for roughly two seasons.

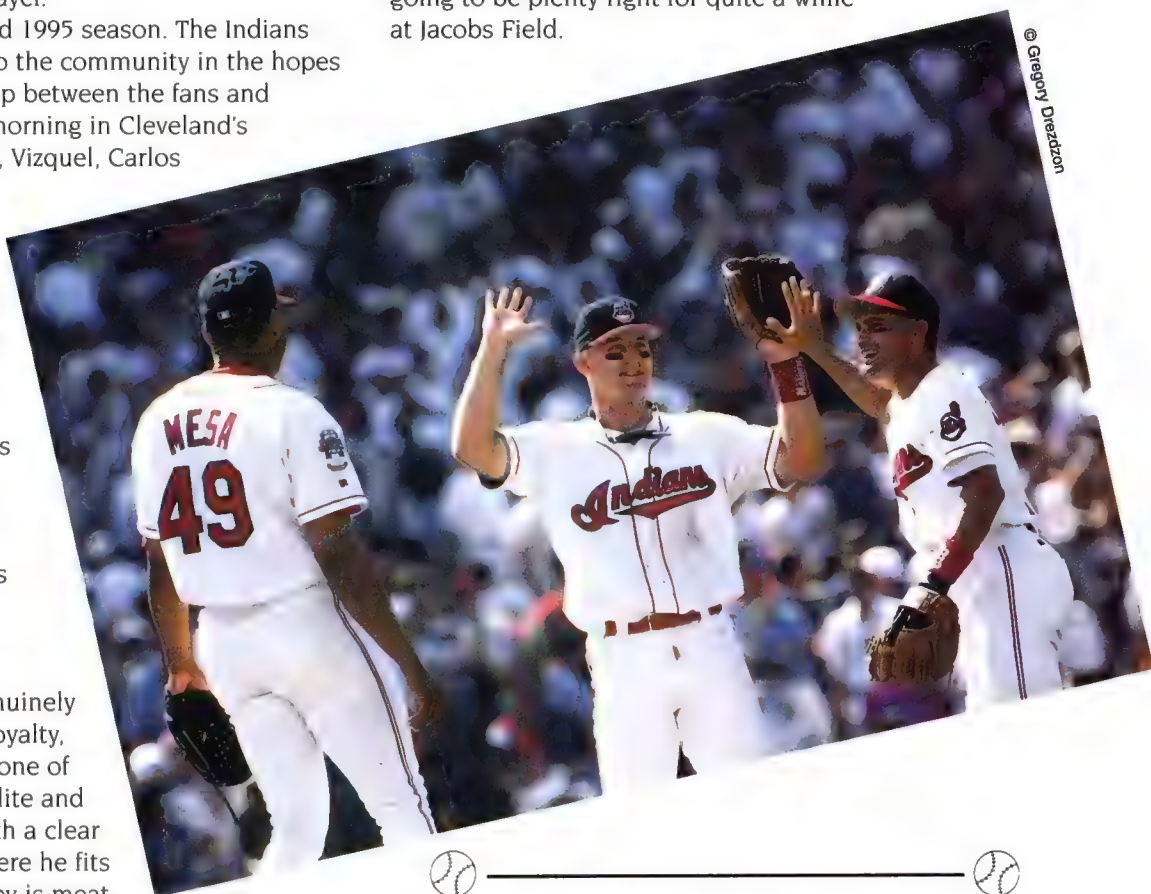
At the end of the session, Baerga seemed to disappear into thin air—almost like a rock star who has mastered the art of leaving the arena. Grimsley walks off to meet some friends and Kirby attracts a crowd that grows with every step.

So does Vizquel. But before leaving Tower City, Omar Vizquel, twice a Gold Glove shortstop, an integral part of what will soon become regarded as the best team in baseball, a man who is arguably the best at what he does in the entire universe, separates himself from his admirers and approaches the talk show host who served as moderator of the panel.

"Thanks for helping us with this," he said to the host. "I enjoyed this a lot and I hope the fans liked us. We're really trying to make things right with the fans, you know."

Heaven knows, Vizquel owed nobody an explanation or a thank you. He's just the type of man who wants things right.

And if he keeps playing shortstop for the Indians the way he has for the last two seasons, things are going to be plenty right for quite a while at Jacobs Field.



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HOW TO SCORE

Baseball fans can enjoy the sport to the fullest extent by keeping track of the game and pinpointing those big plays that bring victory or defeat. All you need is a basic knowledge of the rules.

Although there are countless scoring methods, experts use a simple code based on numbering players by position and tracing action through the use of symbols. It's easy and fun.

In fact, why not devise your own scoring system with the basic suggestions on this page.

One such suggestion on player substitutions is to use a heavy or wavy line under or over a box to indicate a change, either of a player or batter.

If a batter flies to the rightfielder, merely use the figure 9. If it is a foul fly, use 9F.

Now that you are an official "scorer," you can really enjoy baseball games.

Team	Pos.	1	2
Rightfielder	9	4-6 W	
2nd Baseman	4	3 ④FO	
1st Baseman	3	=	
Centerfielder	8	SF 8	
Designated Hitter	DH	K	
Leftfielder	7		4-6
Catcher	2		DP 4-6-3
3rd Baseman	5		⊖
Shortstop	6		7
Pitcher	1		
TOTALS	R / H	1 / 1	1 / 2

Walked and was forced out at second (2nd baseman to shortstop).

Reached first on fielder's choice when runner was forced out, advanced to third on double by 3rd place hitter, scored on 4th place hitter's sacrifice fly.

Doubled; did not advance further.

Flied out to center field scoring runner on third.

Struck out—end of the inning.

Singled; later forced out at second (2nd baseman to shortstop in first half of double play).

Hit into double play (2nd baseman to shortstop to 1st baseman).

Hit home run.

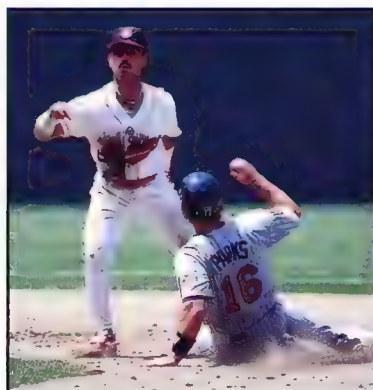
Flied out to leftfielder—end of inning.

USE THESE SYMBOLS FOR PLAYS

— Single	FC Fielder's Choice	PB Passed Ball
= Double	HP Hit by Pitcher	BK Balk
≡ Triple	WP Wild Pitch	K Struck Out
≡ Home Run	SB Stolen Base	BB Base on Balls
E Error	SH Sacrifice Hit	FO Forced Out
F Foul Fly	SF Sacrifice Fly	IW Intentional Walk
DP Double Play	CS Caught Stealing	

CAN YOU SCORE THIS PLAY?

The ball was hit to the shortstop, who threw it to the second baseman. The second baseman was able to force out the runner who had been at first. He then threw the ball to the first baseman to get the batter out, turning a double play.



© Gregory Dreazon, 1994

BK	SB
⊖	W

In this example, the hitter reached first base on a walk, stole second, advanced to third on pitcher's balk, scored on a wild pitch.



CLEVELAND INDIANS CHARITIES

Cleveland Indians Charities was established in 1989 with the purpose of making a Major League impact in the areas of youth education and recreation. Through fund raising events such as the CIC Golf Classic, Stop-n-Shop's Springfest, Jacobs Field tours, the CIC Luncheon Series and several concourse game booths, nearly \$500,000 has been raised for numerous organizations in northeast Ohio during the past six years. Some organizations and programs that benefit from CIC's efforts are: Boys & Girls Clubs of Cleveland, Luke Easter Park, the Community Fund for Assisting Missing Youth (A.M.Y.), Shoes for Kids, Rookie League, Larry Doby RBI, Cleveland Indians Academy, United Way, the United Negro College Fund, Cleveland Baseball Federation and Esperanza, Inc.

SOCIETY BANK CHARITABLE COMPLIMENTARY TICKET PROGRAM

The Indians and Society Bank have teamed up to provide the Charitable Complimentary Ticket Program in Cleveland, which provides tickets for select Indians games to non-profit organizations that assist youths, disabled and senior citizens throughout north-east Ohio. Over 42,000 tickets have been awarded during the past five years. Please write to the Indians Community Relations Department for more details.

ESPERANZA, INC.

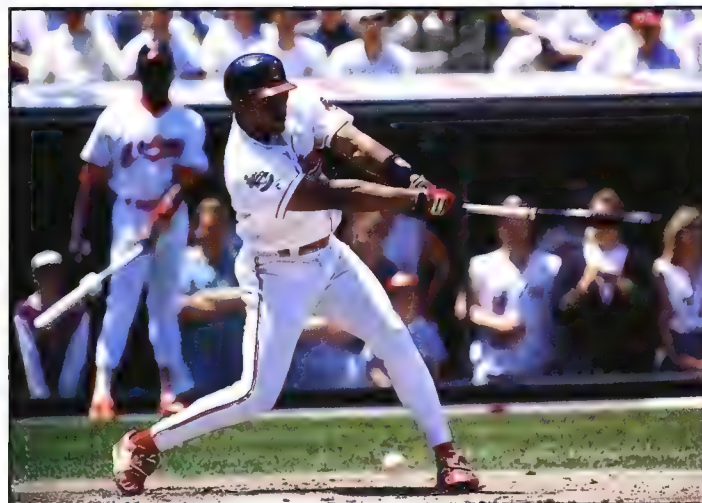
The Indians have found a partner in the Hispanic community by working with Esperanza, an organization dedicated to the educational enrichment of Hispanic youths in Greater Cleveland. Second baseman Carlos Baerga has personally donated a college scholarship for the past three years to a deserving student at the annual Fiesta of Hope Scholarship Luncheon. This year's Fiesta of Hope Luncheon celebration was held on June 23. Please call 651-7178 for more information about the program.

LARRY DOBY RBI PROGRAM

The Reviving Baseball in Inner Cities (RBI) program, **presented by SportsChannel** and supported by Continental Airlines, continues to grow. Last summer it was officially renamed after Indians alumnus Larry Doby. In its third year, the league provides urban youths with an opportunity to learn and play baseball. The league extends

past that goal and stresses positive self-esteem, attendance, sportsmanship and positive life skills.

Games are played at League Park. With help from United Black Fund, local and national sponsors, the program includes play-off games, tournaments and an RBI World Series trip for the All-Stars to a Major League city.



Credit: Gregory Drezdron

UNITED WAY HOME RUN DERBY

This annual program enlists corporate support for each home run hit during the season by the United Way Home Run Derby player chairman. For doing what he does best, Albert Belle has helped raise more than \$108,000 in four years for United Way through the Home Run Derby program. In eight years, Tribe sluggers have been instrumental in raising more than \$200,000 for United Way's area programs and services.



by Brian M. Love

He's only 23 years old.

He stands 6'3" tall, weighs a lean 177 lbs., and has already gained the respect of Major League players and coaches as one of the best middle relievers in the game.

At first glance, he does not even look like a power pitcher. His lanky physique and baby-face are characteristics most give to a budding teenager fresh out of junior high. His long leg-kick can lead fans, players, and coaches alike to believe that he is being nonchalant about his delivery. But a batter's first look at the 94 mph fastball he hurls *proves* that looks can be deceiving.

Regardless of how his appearance may seem, Julian Tavarez is a true, 100%, no doubt about it, impact pitcher for the Cleveland Indians.

"He's matured a lot," said Indians All-Star closer Jose Mesa. "Julian learned a lot in winter ball." That has been very evident since he's returned from AAA Charlotte.

In 28 appearances, Tavarez has compiled a record of 5-0 and an ERA of 1.09.

Not too shabby.

Tavarez spent most of the 1994 season at Charlotte. There he posted a 15-6 record with a 3.48 ERA in 26 starts. He had the second most wins in the Indians organization and was tied for most in the International League. After two starts between May 26 and May 31,

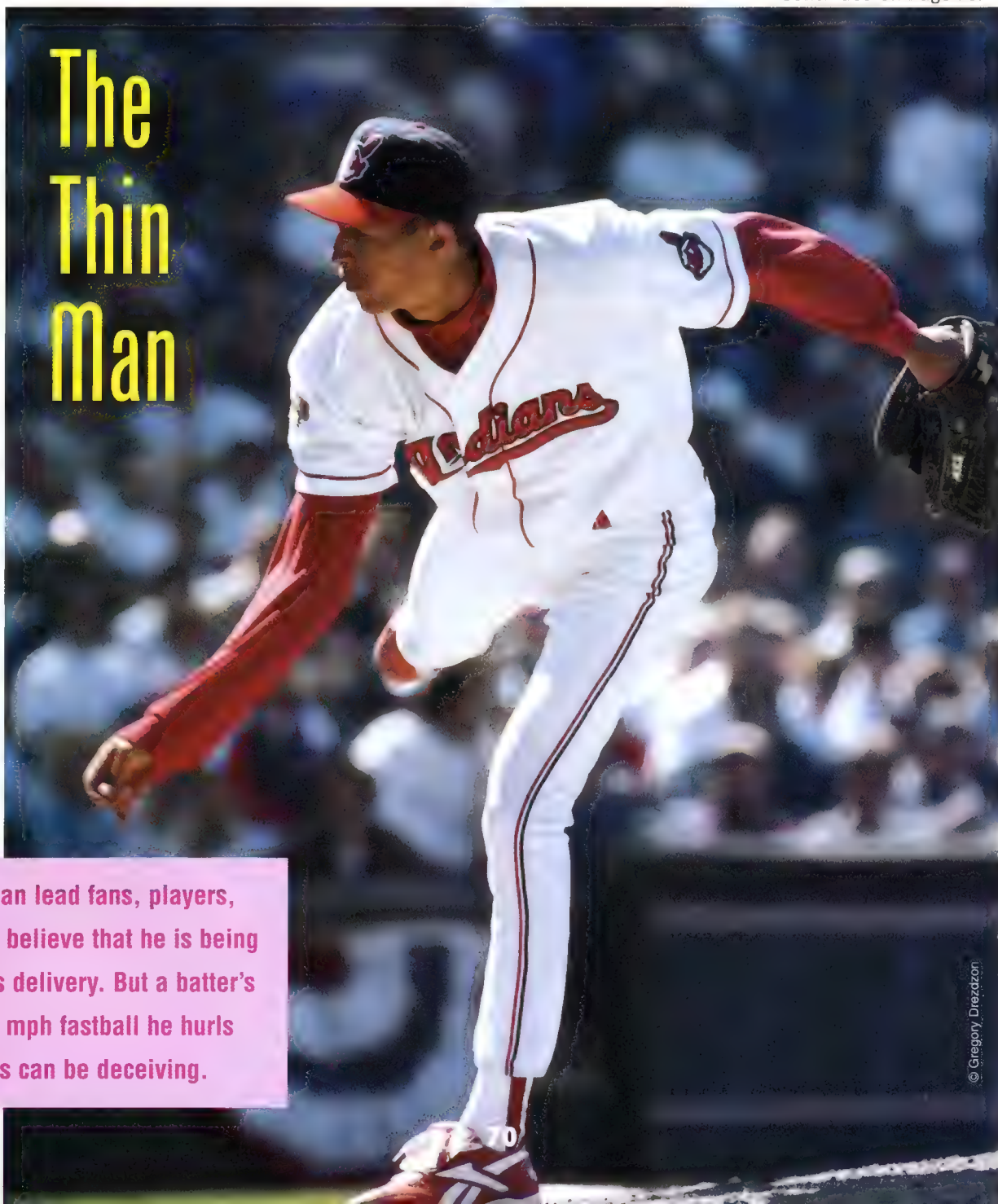
Tavarez gave up eight earned runs in only 2.2 innings pitched. Although the second appearance was a postponement due to rain, the decision was still made for him to be optioned back to AAA where he stayed for the remainder of the '94 season.

"That was very frustrating for me because I knew I was a better pitcher than that," Tavarez confessed. He is absolutely correct. In 1993, he received many honors for his outstanding year in the Carolina League. Tavarez was:

- Named "Player of the Year" for his accomplishments at Class A Kinston.
- Named to the Mid-Season and Post-Season Carolina League All-Star Teams.
- Dubbed the 4th Best Prospect in the Carolina League

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The Thin Man



His long leg-kick can lead fans, players, and coaches alike to believe that he is being nonchalant about his delivery. But a batter's first look at the 94 mph fastball he hurls *proves* that looks can be deceiving.

Phenom, Llenas was impressed enough to sign him. After that, Tavaréz did nothing but shine.

In 1991 in the Dominican League, Tavaréz gave up only 95 hits in 121.1 innings of work. In '92 in the Appalachian League, he ranked in the top eight of six different categories, including number of starts (#1), innings pitched (tied #1), complete games (tied #4), shutouts (tied #1), ERA (#8), and ratio of walks per nine innings pitched (1.24). He then proceeded to put up good numbers in 1993 and '94 while at Class A Kinston, Class AA Canton-Akron, and Class AAA Charlotte.

Throughout his pitching career, Tavaréz has built his numbers and experience as a starter.

He was originally a starter when brought up to the Majors. With the performance of Chad Ogea and the acquisitions of Dennis Martinez and Orel Hershisier, Tavaréz has since assumed the role of #1 right-handed middle reliever. And whether he's a reliever, set-up man, or starter, he is still grateful for the opportunity to pitch.

"Whether I'm starting or in the bullpen, I still have the opportunity to pitch," Tavaréz said. "I've always liked the starting role, but up here we have a lot of really good pitchers and I know I fit best in the lineup coming out of the bullpen. There are a lot of chances in baseball and I just try to make the most of mine."

And he has, sporting an undefeated record and an ERA of almost 1.00 as of July 18.

Even though Tavaréz is all about takin' care of business while on the field, he's very much the comedian off the field.

"I am having a lot of fun right now," expressed Tavaréz.

According to Vizquel, Julian has a very indifferent attitude about life.

"Julian lives in his own world," joked Vizquel with a Venezuelan accent. "He's a crazy, silly boy. He's always saying to everyone, 'I'm so silly.'"

When Mesa was asked to describe Julian, he answered, "He's crazy; you know that."

Although Tavaréz might be a comedian to some of his teammates, he was very serious about the off-season during the winter of 1994. During that winter, Julian worked on his command of the English language with the help of Indians Director of Community Relations, Allen Davis. Julian was very eager to learn with Davis, where there was a feeling of comfort.

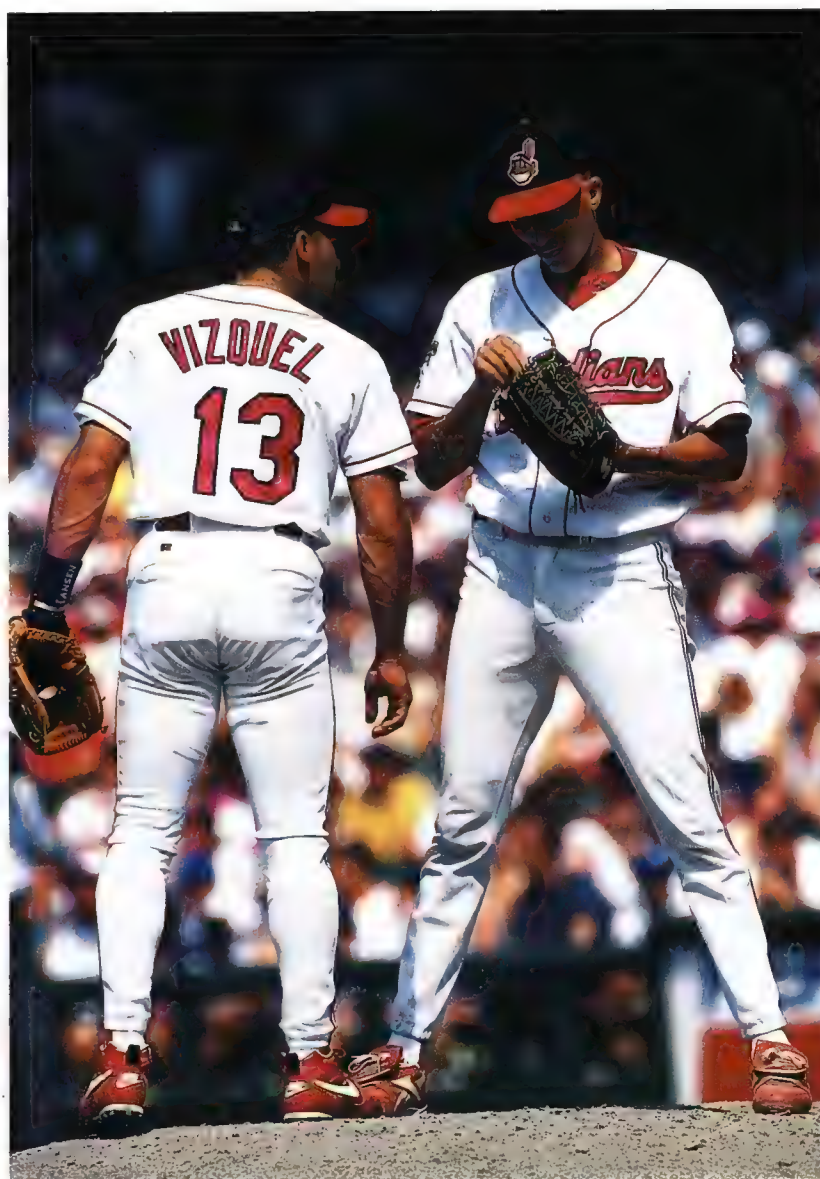
"We developed a comfort level with each other," Davis said. "Julian has a tremendous capacity for learning. He was also very motivated and willing, so I think that helped a great deal."

Julian was paired with Allen Davis through a new program that has been set up by the Indians Baseball Operations Department. Through this program, Hispanic players have the opportunity to learn more about the English language.

"We used a hodge podge of learning techniques," Davis continued. "I used to be a Spanish teacher, so when I taught English to Julian, I just did it in reverse. While utilizing a baseball context to help him, we used text books, flashcards, coins, and mock post-game interviews so that Julian would get an idea of what to expect in different conversational situations."

"One thing a lot of people have asked me is if I've ever wanted to be a reporter or talk show host," added Tavaréz. It seems like it would be pretty fun to do, but I haven't really thought about it."

Whether Julian Tavaréz is to be the next Geraldo or the next Goose Gossage, his career future doesn't seem to be too shabby.



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by *Baseball America*.

- In an annual poll by the Carolina League's magazine, *Tools of the Trade*, he was picked as "Best Pitching Prospect" in the CL and was chosen as having the "Best Fastball."

Once again, not too shabby.

After doing so well, the coaches in the organization thought he was ready to make a jump. Tavaréz was moved to AA Canton-Akron on July 19, 1993. While playing at AA Canton-Akron as well as A Kinston, Tavaréz had a combined ERA of 1.69 and 118 strikeouts in 138 innings pitched. His compiled record was 13-6.

Liking what they saw, the Indians purchased his contract less than three weeks later.

Julian's contract was unique in that he was signed as a non-drafted free agent.

"When I was growing up, I did not play high school or college baseball," Tavaréz remembers. "I did not know what a contract was all about. Of course I had a dream of playing in the Major Leagues, but I didn't know I was going to get paid to do it."

Indians Manager Mike Hargrove was concerned that like most young pitchers, Tavaréz would have a difficult time adjusting to big league hitters. Grover's concern came after Tavaréz's first two appearances early into the '94 season. Julian spent the rest of the season adjusting in the minors.

"He has definitely matured in his mentality," added two-time Gold Glove Winner Omar Vizquel. "He's a lot better on the mound this year since winter ball."

"Winter ball really helped me with my fundamentals," Tavaréz admitted. "I had a chance to get stronger and to work on my control and hitting my spots."

A big part of the fact that his control seems a lot better

is because Julian is more relaxed on the mound now that he has some experience.

"He seems more comfortable now in pressure situations," noticed Vizquel. "He's the type of pitcher that can get himself and his team out of a jam."

That was proven on Sunday, July 16, 1995 when he struck out the final batter with bases loaded in the top of the eighth inning and the score tied with Oakland at 3-3.

That feat allowed the Indians to later go into extra innings and defeat the Athletics 6-4 on a Manny Ramirez blast to the left field bleachers.

Tavaréz's attitude toward the game is definitely one of business while on the field.

"When I step onto the field, I'm very serious about what I'm doing," Tavaréz determined.

It showed during three years in the minors where Tavaréz compiled a career record of 43-22 with a total ERA of 2.89. He had five shutouts in 11 complete games and 397 strikeouts in 604.2 innings pitched.

As you probably guessed, not too shabby.

Julian began his baseball career in Little League in Santiago, Dominican Republic.

There, he attended public school, but like many other children in Santiago, he did not have the opportunity to play school league organized baseball.

"Like I said before, I did not have the chance to play baseball in high school or college," repeated Julian. "I did not even go to college. I just played whenever I could." Evidently, he played a great deal and played well, because when he got a chance to be seen by Major League Scouts, he made the most of it.

Winston Llenas, an Indians scout in the Dominican Republic, heard about a young phenomenal pitcher who had a fastball that topped at 96 mph. After seeing this



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MAJOR LEAGUE BASEBALL AND THE INDIANS MAKE "TEAM" A WINNER



Baseball's most important pitch this season won't come from a mound. In an effort to combat drinking and driving, Major League Baseball, together with the Techniques for Effective Alcohol Management (TEAM) coalition, will make comprehensive appeal to fans this year. The message:

**PLEASE DON'T
DRINK AND DRIVE.**

Major League Baseball joined TEAM in 1987. Fourteen organizations are now members of the coalition, representing professional sports, federal and state agencies and private industry. In addition to Major League Baseball, Allstate Insurance Company, CBS Sports, Comsat Video Enterprises, the International Association of Auditorium Managers, Mothers Against Drunk Driving, the Motor Vehicle Manufacturers Association, the National Association of Broadcasters, the National Association of Governor's Highway Safety Representatives, the National Basketball Association, the National Collegiate Athletic Association, the National Traffic Safety Administration, the National Hockey League and the National Safety Council are members.

TEAM was established to accomplish two objectives:

- Assist ballparks and arenas in the development of alcohol management policies and procedures.
- Conduct public service campaigns that reinforce awareness of the dangers associated with drinking and driving. These campaigns promote the value of a designated driver and the importance of responsible drinking.

As part of the TEAM program, each Major

League club has reviewed and altered its alcohol policies. The size of the cup and the number of beers a customer can purchase have been drastically reduced. Many clubs now cut off beer sales before the game ends and nearly half do not vend beer in the stands. Alcohol-free sections are commonplace in many parks. Every club is running public service announcements asking fans to drink responsibly and warning them against the consequences of drinking and driving.

The results have been encouraging. The number of alcohol-related incidents in and around baseball parks has dropped.

Baseball's efforts also include a multi-media public service announcement campaign that promoted "TEAM Spirit" on television during network telecasts of regular and post-season games. TEAM PSA's over the years have featured Tommy Lasorda, Mark Langston, Shane Rawley, Chili Davis and Don Baylor encouraging fans not to drink and drive.

The Indians have also jumped on the bandwagon when it comes to safe, responsible drinking at Jacobs Field. All hosts, guest service personnel, security guards, ticket sellers and parking lot attendants are trained in spotting the signs of intoxication among fans and how to control and prevent alcohol-related incidents. In addition, there are banners behind concession stands encouraging fans to drink responsibly and to choose a designated driver in their group. Those interested in participating in the Designated Driver program, **sponsored by A1 General**, may sign up at Guest Service Centers, Section 116 of the Main Concourse or Section 519 of the Upper Concourse, to receive a free soft drink certificate, a wristband saying they aren't purchasing alcohol and a chance to win a Tribe cap from the Indians Team Shop.

The Traffic Director



By Brian M. Love

An Indians baserunner leads off of first base. The count is one ball, one strike. He checks the pitcher's set—there's a quick throw to first and he dives back safely. Omar Vizquel dusts himself off and regains his lead. The next pitch is in the dirt. It's now the perfect situation for the one play in baseball that can ignite an offense—the hit and run. The count is now 2 and 1, there's a man on first with one out, and Carlos Baerga, who has two of the quickest hands in baseball, is at the plate.

Vizquel gives third base coach, Jeff Newman, a quick look. There's a brush of the forearm from Newman; a tap on the nose... then to the chin... then to the brim of the cap; a rub of the chest; and a final swipe of the belt. All of this is punctuated with three quick claps of the hands.

The speedy shortstop acknowledges Newman. Vizquel, for the final time, checks the pitcher's set... he's off and Carlos Baerga turns on an inside fastball. It's a clean, sharp, line drive single that rips into right field.

Perfect execution.

Contrary to popular belief, Jeff Newman wasn't swatting at a nagging insect, or dusting lint from his uniform. And I don't think he has too much experience conducting an orchestra. Newman, the Tribe's third base coach, might look as if he's attempting these things, but in a way, he's directing traffic.

During the game, he gives the red lights, the green lights, the stop signs and the caution signs.

"Half the time I feel like I should be giving the sign for prayer." As complicated as signing can actually be, a prayer might not be a bad idea in assuring that everyone gets them right.

"I can really get confused sometimes," admitted two-time Gold Glove Winner Omar Vizquel. "There are so many signs that, if you don't concentrate, you can get lost."

Vizquel added that he and All-Star teammate Kenny Lofton have found a way to help alleviate the problem.

"There are some times when Kenny and I just give signs of our own. It's not quite as confusing then."

Although to the fans it may seem as if Mr. Newman is waving a lot of mumbo-jumbo, he's in effect running the offense and is very well respected by the players.

"Jeff is a very intense competitor and loves to win," said Indians hurler Charles Nagy. "He's a hard worker and he wants us to work hard as well."

Vizquel agreed.

"He's the voice of the team. Jeff tells everybody what's



happening. That includes when to bunt, swing away, steal, or tag up."

Each sign is a small message that lets each player know what to do in a given situation. For

each set of signs, there are specific roles each offensive player has to fill. For example, when Omar Vizquel was on first base with Carlos Baerga at the plate, the signs that Jeff Newman gave told Vizquel when to take off for second base. They also told Baerga to swing at the next pitch, wherever it was pitched.

"The signs change throughout the game based on the situation," said Vizquel. "That's why it can be confusing."

How do they know the difference between a "real" sign and a "fake" sign? Well, there is also a sign called an indicator which precedes the actual, or "real" signs. If coach Newman does not touch that indicator, then, all the signs given are "fake." Also, if coach Newman gives a series of signs before he touches the indicator, then all of the signs given before the indicator are void.

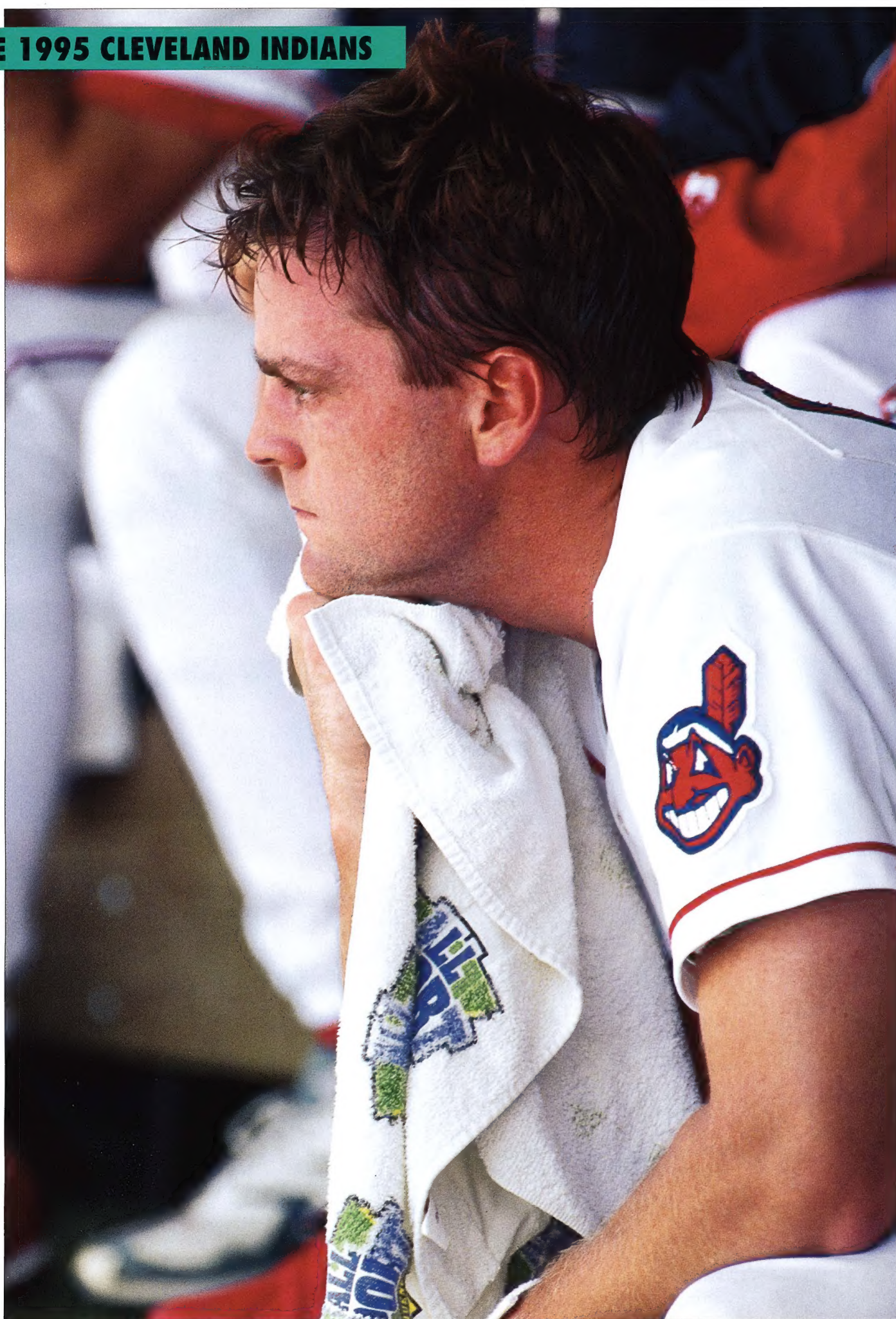
"It's a complex system, but it works," added Vizquel.

Jeff Newman has been in professional baseball for over 25 years. He's played, coached, and seen a lot of baseball. There's a lot to be said about that and a lot to be respected. There's not too much room for errors out on the diamond, so Newman makes sure that if anyone is heard saying "oops" because of a missed sign, it's his own voice he's hearing and no one else's.

Each sign is a small message given to each player on what to do in a given situation. For each set of signs, there are specific roles each offensive player has to fill.

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THE 1995 CLEVELAND INDIANS





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"I hope that groundskeeper learned NOT to wear contacts while mowing the field."